



North Carolina National Guard Press Release

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PRESS RELEASE

TO: News Directors, Editors
FROM: Maj. Matt Handley
Public Affairs Officer
DATE: March 24, 2008
RE: Family members remember Guardsmen

WEAVERVILLE, NC – A close knit family in western NC remembered their son, husband and father today after learning he was killed by an Improvised Explosive Device while on patrol with his military police company.

The deceased, North Carolina National Guardsman and Navy Veteran, Sgt. Thomas C. Ray 40 lived in Weaverville with his wife and daughter.

Born in Asheville, NC, Thomas called El Paso Texas home for most of his growing years graduating from High School there in 1987. Thomas was assigned to the 105th Military Police Battalion in Asheville, NC and volunteered to join the 1132nd on their deployment to Iraq. He is survived by his mother, Ozelle M. Ray, and his wife Linda Kay, and daughter Sydney Paige.

His mom remembered how when Thomas wanted to join the Navy, “He begged me to sign the early enlistment waiver.” She related how he always wanted to be a medic. Thomas was Medical/Dental Specialist during his first tour serving the Nation. “I’m incredibly proud of my son.” she said, “He gave his life doing what he wanted to do, and I can live with that.”

After leaving the Navy, Thomas worked a variety of positions and in recent years began to work in the Security field and found a place he felt at home. It was working in this profession when he learned about the opportunities in the NC National Guard Military Police community. His wife remarked how “He loved being in the military.” Thomas experience rang true, in his Military Police training course he was recognized as “Exceeding Course Standards” and “demonstrated outstanding contributions to group work.”

With deployment to Iraq, his wife said he went hoping to make a difference. “He wanted to save lives and bring back the younger guys.” Linda went on to say that, “He’s a loving husband and father who is irreplaceable and will be greatly missed.”

Note to Editors and Reporters: Family does not wish to speak with the media.